

Town of Brookline
Advisory Committee Minutes

Harry K. Bohrs, Chair

March 11, 2014

Present: Harry K. Bohrs, Carla Benka, Clifford M. Brown, Lea Cohen, John Doggett, Bernard Greene, Nancy S. Heller, Amy F. Hummel, Systke Humphrey, Angela Hyatt, Alisa G. Jonas, Janice S. Kahn, Bobbie Knable, Fred Levitan, Sean M. Lynn-Jones, Shaari S. Mittel, Michael Sandman, Lee L. Selwyn, Stanley L. Spiegel, Charles Swartz, Leonard A. Weiss, Karen Wenc, Christine Westphal

Absent: Sumner J. Chertok, Kelly A. Hardebeck, Pamela Lodish

The meeting was called to order at 7:05 PM.

1. Agenda Item: Veterans' Affairs FY 2015 Budget

Presenting for the subcommittee is: Sytske Humphrey

See Appendix for Report of Subcommittee

Also present: Bill McGroarty (Director of Veterans Services)

Demographics have shifted to older veterans. A lot of lower income vets being shifted from full Mass Health to Mass Health Buy-in, so it pays for their Medicare coverage, but they lose their prescription coverage. Veterans' Affairs are trying to help in the interim.

They are working to get them into the VA system, which will bring them down to much lower or no cost prescriptions, to control costs. This takes a lot of time. And filing appeals to get Mass Health back.

Also: It's been a hard winter, so people with overwhelming fuel costs are making choices between heat, food, and medicine; and they are coming in for the first time. People who were too proud to ever come in before.

Their job program has been very effective, to help young vets who have never before had jobs and come out of 4 years of military; gives them another reference, they are working, and keeps their head above water while they are looking for work. For many, their spouses are working.

One man they are working with has moved forward to a career path, home owner, family man; full success story.

Discussion:

Q: Aren't all former soldiers entitled to VA benefits? A: No. The benefits change with administrations. Or you have people who may get thrown out for asset limit (\$80,000 in assets, for example.) No one gives you a means test to go into service; but there certainly is to get VA benefits.

Q: Average length of VA case? Can take 1-2 years on filing a claim, but then they get back pay.

Q: 115 cases: how long do they stay active? A: Some have been on for 10+ years, and are elderly and low income, and will remain for life. Some people are young and will be on for a few months.

Q: Shooting at the boarding house that involved a veteran? A: Their office wasn't working with him, due to the family's decision not to go that route.

McGroarty notes: Every vet who works with Veterans Services has his home number – he would much rather spend Saturday night with one of his vets than Monday morning in county jail. Shooting guy – family didn't come to them.

Q: How are vets suffering PTSD self-medicating? A: Mostly, by alcohol. 50% of the problem is sleep. This is not new. Trick is to get to them with advocacy.

Q: Is this budget sufficient for their needs in the coming year? A: It's like DPW snow budget – depends on the winter. If economy picks up and winter isn't too hard, they'll be okay. He always asks for a little bit less, given the constraints the town is under.

Vote:

Upon motion duly noted and seconded, the committee voted in regard to the Subcommittee's recommendation to accept the Veterans Affairs FY 2015 budget as listed on IV-101 of \$321,818

21 unanimous.

Reserve Fund Transfer Request:

They are looking at reserve of \$25,000 for benefits and \$5,000 for Memorial Day, now that Flag Day Parade is gone. Majority is 115 benefits.

They get reimbursed for much of their costs, and that goes into the town.

Vote:

Upon motion duly noted and seconded, the committee voted in regard to the Reserve Fund Transfer request for Veterans Services in the amount of \$30,000

21 unanimous.

2. Agenda Item: Town Clerk

Presenting for the subcommittee is: Harry Bohrs

Also present: Town Clerk Patrick Ward

See Appendix for Report of Subcommittee.

Bohrs: Notes: There are 6 positions. Revised budget increases by 15% as opposed to 12.6% in original budget. A lot is driven by expenses for election workers. There will be 3 elections this year. They tend to be long days. In original proposed budget, they would reduce from 6 to 5 positions, and establish new position in planning to coordinate between Planning, ZBA, etc. Since that proposed budget, there has been extensive conversation and sharper looking at this. There a number of things Clerk is statutorily required to do; all of those tasks can't be exported out of Clerk's office. Some will move over; some will remain in Clerk's office. Revised budget goes from 6 FTE's to 5.5 FTEs (\$13,025 is difference). This includes restoration of .5 FTE back into Town Clerk's budget.

Ward: He agrees that the position should move into Planning, but there are statutory limitations. All the administration and secretarial functions will reside in planning, where it belongs. He's satisfied with Town Administrator's recommendation. Mainly, their increase in budget is managing pre-elections; most of what they do is the same every year: census, vital records, for example. There is a complaint about long lines at polling stations, and they will try out split voting lists. It requires that people who arrive read the signs and get into the right line. League of Women Voters allow them to search if they are a registered voter on the website, and then they can see where they go. But many people are concerned about security issues. Now, Burlington and Boston do this very successfully He is going forward with this in Brookline, but with caution, to test it out this fall. They are contemplating in the next cycle, to let people fill their street listing out on the website; by entering, emailing, or faxing it. That would improve their return list, and therefore create a better voting list.

Discussion:

Q: Please outline statutory tasks that the clerk's office must do under the ZBA. A: Under 40 A, to receive applications and receive the decisions. The ½ position they got back is not for ZBA, but for other Clerk's duties.

Q: Their precinct town members met recently and talked about low voter turnout. Are there May and November elections every year? A: November elections are only every other year.

Q: Is there a statutory requirement about when town elections occur? A: Yes, there is a time in May after which it may not happen. Q: Cost of May election? A: Between \$75-80,000.

Q: What is the impact on their department of same day registration? A: He imagines same day registration will be attached to providing local aid, so he thinks it will never pass. He's in favor of it, but implementation is very expensive.

Q: Who is pushing on having updating of census information online. A: It's his idea, but the League of Women Voters are encouraging them to create a search engine for people to figure out whether they are registered and where they vote.

Q: Is there a cost associated with this? A: Only the time of the webmaster.

Comment: She's used the Boston system, and it is very helpful. To just get online and to be able to see that she was registered (her friend) and where they vote. There is very little private information involved. We need to be responsive to technological innovation.

Comment: Note that privacy concerns are overblown. Voter list is public information, which will be provided from Town Clerk's office. It includes your age. The mass marketing of this date is massive and readily available. Not sure that the concerns, relative to the benefit, are very strong.

Q: Capital expense on election furniture? A: New tables and chairs. They were purchased in 2001, are fiberboard, and are getting cracked. Looking to purchase some to replace these. Q: Why not rent furniture? A: It wouldn't be cost effective. Q: Where are they stored? A: In the Town Hall basement.

Q: What about furniture already at the schools? A: They already use furniture there.

Q: Any thought of extending hours, or opportunity to vote on weekends? A: These are all legislative solutions which must be done statewide. Some communities vote on weekends, but in Brookline, a large part of the population considers Saturday a holiday. Many things can be changed, but better equipment, innovation in processing people, and other ideas – may have an impact.

Q: On making voting easier, what about mail-in voting? Can we do it legally for local elections? A: No, it would require a constitutional amendment, for any election. Only reasons now: physical disability, religious preferences, out of town during elections, can get an absentee ballot. There are provisions for early voting being considered in the legislature. Pat would support this.

Comment: The information is already there on the internet, so to use this to benefit us in terms of expanding voting participation, would be useful and make sense.

Comment: If there is a way to serve the needs of people to be able to vote, she would support this.

Bohrs: Might be worthy of broader conversation in the community.

Vote:

Upon motion duly noted and seconded, the committee voted in favor of the FY15 Town Clerk's Office operating budget in the amount of \$627,632.

22 unanimous.

3. Agenda Item: Planning and Community Development/ Economic Development

Presenting for the subcommittee is: Sean Lynn-Jones

Also present: Planning Director Alison Steinfeld, Building Commissioner Daniel Bennett

See Appendix for Report of Subcommittee.

Lynn-Jones : The simple math. The reason for the increase is that our CDBG funding is down as well as we are moving a ½ position over to ZBA, which is very important, especially with the Hancock Village project. Applications by statute must still come in via Town Clerk's office, and those functions will remain there.

Discussion:

Steinfeld: Note that Economic Development is really part of one Planning Department. Not a separate department. Regulatory planners are now funded exclusively through Town. That is their key function: to protect regulation and preservation within the town. They really need a part-time accountant, to reconcile the town's MUNIS system and federal IDIS system; funded exclusively w/block fund grants. No benefits. Zoning administration: new position. Critical because a mistake in time stamping could lead to a statutory and unintended constructive approval of a project.

Q: With new staffing handling of ZBA activities, will that speed up publication of minutes? A: Yes. That will be primary responsibility - to submit minutes timely to Town Clerk, within a week or so.

Q: What about CDBG low income areas? A: We have to establish target areas, which we do not have. We only get this because we have old housing stock. We are able to identify eligible projects, but it's not easy. Easier in less affluent communities.

Q: Who gets notice? A: Notices to abutters, abutters to abutters w/in 300 feet. Do they also get notice of planning board hearings? A: Yes. Q: But an AC member did not get notice, nor did other neighbors who were abutters. There seems to be a disparity in who is notified, or timing of notice. Q: Do all town meeting members get notice? A: All town meeting members in the precinct get notices of ZBA. It is in the zoning regulations. Planning board notice isn't subject to these 40A regulations. Steinfeld will determine whether planning board is also required to give notice.

Town Clerk, Building Commissioner, and Steinfeld will set down and further define the role of the new Assistant, in preparation to post the new assistant position.

Q: Are planners still doing some very administrative stuff, such as 'stuffing envelopes'? A: She has reiterated to staff that is for administrative staff to do that, but given how many mailings, everyone has to help out with mailings from time to time.

Comment: In preservation world, there is specialized interest, but a lot of the work is basically planning type work that doesn't really require special expertise. She's not sure why planners are considered such specialized planners. A: No question that all of their planners are highly specialized in their field and their administrative responsibilities can be moved over to administrative staff.

Q: Housing authority is often looking for funding for their facilities, such as updating their computers; providing internet access to tenants as opposed to having to pay their own; (and then their kids can't do their homework). What about our housing projects? Can it go to other needs than roofs, and building?

A: They do have deep needs, but the regulations require them to spread around how they spend, and % are regulated for each type of expenditure.

Q: Why can't we spend CDBG money, when we have the needs? A: The town of Brookline has made a huge commitment to affordable housing. And also made big commitments to housing projects. But the regulations limit how they can spend CBDG money.

Q: Anything we should know about development in the town?

3 major projects:

1. Redcab site approved for hotel. Construction to begin spring 2014.
2. Cleveland Circle has been resurrected recently.
3. Brookline Place: Proposed warrant articles on this in spring 2014. Will generate \$million to the town.

Also: Hancock Village.

Waldo Street? Nothing in front of them now.

Vote:

Upon motion duly noted and seconded, the committee voted in regard to the Subcommittee's recommendation for a FY2015 appropriation of \$765,301 for Planning and Community Development

22 unanimous.

4. Agenda Item: Building Department

Presenting for the subcommittee is: Amy Hummel

Note: Correction to the report: 27 Ackers Avenue rent is \$1,500 per month, not per year.

Also present: Charlie Simmons and Dan Bennett from the Building Department

See Appendix for Report of Subcommittee.

Discussion:

Q: Are cars using the charging station at Town Hall? A: Yes, a little bit.

Q: Do we have a space plan for buildings, where we know our public building's capacity; and also private space within the town, that might be available to use? Do we know what private institutional space might be available? What about an inventory of this? It appears we don't have this, and there's a suggestion that this be done w/in the town.

A: Building Department is working closely with School Department; they are looking at private buildings, together with Peter Rowe and Superintendent. They are renting a few temples. They've been all over town. It is School Department's goal to find space. Also, Building is looking at space and then what it would cost to bring it up to code. For example, Pine Manor is just too costly to get involved with.

Q: What is happening at Lawrence now? A: They bid for modulars; one came back, over budget. They are dealing with School Department and Town Administrator to move forward as regularly built 'stick built' project. Must decide by Thursday of this week to do this.

Q: What about AC, as we're using our school building year round. Currently AC is in staff and computer rooms. Are we thinking about the use of our schools year round? Will we continue to limit AC to just a few spaces. Are we also thinking about using the classrooms for a full day – multi use for instruction and afterschool time, extended day, too?

Q: What about AC in HS. Town meeting members complain after May town meeting. Utility costs would be very high. There are 4 large fans in there, now, to help. A: There is a huge portable AC that is taken over there, and runs on Town Meeting nights.

A: There is not a policy to AC the entire buildings. Last summer was first time to use Runkle, and it was brutal, w/temperatures over 100 degrees in some rooms. Most programs, kids go outside a lot. Last summer, they put in temporary AC at HS, Devotion, and Runkle. Not ideal, but very expensive to install AC and doesn't seem to be goal of School Department to install AC.

Q: Are there any novel or original designs for AC in place at the HS? A: The old ventilation system used to come up from underground vents. New unit is on the roof, bringing in air from outside. Couldn't we do geo cooling? A: But would be expensive.

A: For questions about classroom use, better addressed to School Department. School space is community space.

Q: Will expansion of cameras outside schools require more personnel to monitor? A: No, the office staff monitors it. It lets office staff view what's going on outside, around the perimeter.

Comment: \$1.1 million spent annually on repairs and maintenance in the schools. Has only gone up about 2% each year. Bennett is asking for more funds to do this, and is part of the override. Note: As the base starts to grow, this item will continue to grow.

Q: Old Lincoln School – discussion of using it seriously for a number of years, possibly as a middle school. Beyond what we've put in, do we anticipate anything major to make it a school? Currently \$3.5 million investment for – outside garage, roof, internal systems – heating, electric – upgrading the toilets. School department has requested science labs. Both sides are aware of small budget and how to get this set up for usage. Building will be set up for 6-8, later for HS. They might add gas for labs (gas lines are there); 9th grade uses gas. We will probably need a lot of rooms there. There's some money for masonry too.

Comment: \$3.5 mil does not seem like enough money to go the work that needs to be done. AC member, who is an architect, is nervous about the plans and renovations needs and are they being adequately addressed. The parents of kids who go there are concerned about various issues. There's only about \$2.5 million for construction. She feels it's a great building, but concerned that there isn't enough money to do what needs to be done.

Q: Do we have a better sense what it really needs, now we know what will be done with it in the next few years? A: It depends on what the expectations are. It will not be a renovated school; it will be water tight, systems that work, and adequate for learning purposes. But not equal for school buildings we are renovating or have recently renovated.

Comment: Remember: Runkle used the school for 2+ years, and teachers and kids made it work. It was perfectly adequate 3 years ago.

Q: if there isn't enough money, what do we do? A: Town meeting by 2/3 vote would need to vote another bond.

Q: If school were packed full, is there more that has to be done? A: Assuming no big surprises in the building, shouldn't be any big needs. Mainly returning most rooms to what they were: science labs, auditorium, etc. Remove partitions and take what is there.

Note: Health Department is looking into air quality issues.

Q: What about water? All the water lines will be done over to the main. So the lead shouldn't be a problem the way there was before

Q: Should we look into the cost of replacing water bottles (big bubble) with easy water bubbler type access? We have 8,000 bottles of water purchased for the town each year. A: We are starting to put these in – at HS and other places. As a bubbler, it may be more expensive?

Q: Auto Museum – Under the old system, we were paying outrageously for certain items. A: The tenants are paying their rent, including past due rent. Town is maintaining the building and it is open and safe. It's in a holding pattern.

Q: Very useful that we have permitting system online and can see this. But there's no way to do this by precinct right now. When it hits Planning Board, town meeting knows (usually). But on the smaller, neighborhood disruptive ones, we are not brought in on this. Example: Construction work being done at 11 am at night. Building Department came out and fined them. A: He will look into it, but this online feature may not be customizable.

Q: Building permits supposed to be displayed prominently? A: If they are not, Building doesn't enforce it; you don't tend to see it for smaller improvements. But it is requirement to be publically posted.

Vote:

Upon motion duly noted and seconded, the committee voted in the amount of **\$7,024,504** for the FY15 Building Department budget

21 unanimous.

Motion to adjourn, unanimous.

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40 PM.

Appendix:

- A. Subcommittee Report on: Veterans Services Budget Report; and Reserve Transfer Request**
- B. Subcommittee Report on: Planning Department Budget Report**
- C. Subcommittee Report on: Town Clerk's Budget Report; and Memo of Town Administrator re modification of budget recommendations**
- D. Subcommittee Report on: Building Department Budget**

Human Services Subcommittee Hearing
February 25, 5:30 pm
Town hall, room 301
The meeting was duly posted on the Town's calendar
Veterans Services [IV101-103]

ATTENDANCE

Bill McGroarty (Director of Veterans Services); Melissa Goff (Selectmen's Office); Lea Cohen (AC); Sytske Humphrey (AC).

BUDGET

The FY15 budget shows an increase of \$25,000 in mandated Veteran's Benefits and \$825 for longevity.

- An increase in demands for Veteran's Benefits, coupled with unforeseen circumstances (burials and incremental raises in the benefits rate) necessitated a \$25,000 increase in the 2015 budget.
- Due to the economy and state requirements for healthcare, additional Veterans will apply for needed Services and Veteran's Benefits as the year progresses.

SERVICES

- An increase in demands for Veteran's Benefits, coupled with unforeseen circumstances (burials and incremental raises in the benefits rate) necessitated an increase in the budget.
- The Director currently manages 38 PTSD cases: many young people are suffering and are often self medicating.
- The Director works closely with Brookline Mental health, Council on Aging and the VA Outpatient Program to address our Veterans needs.
- The Brookline Veterans Temporary Employment Initiative continues to be successful. The program is open to Brookline Vets and provides employment at \$13.00 an hour for up to 24 hours a week. The program seeks to employ 4-8 veterans as they transition to civilian life. Last year's participants found permanent employment and were also able to complete educational requirements and/or receive their college degrees.
- The Director continues to be actively engaged in the Community Emergency Management Plan (in its 8th year!)
- The Director continues to support Veterans family members in times of bereavement and subsequent financial needs through providing assistance to obtain Healthcare and widow pensions.

RECOMMENDATION

The subcommittee recommends accepting the budget as listed on IV-101 of \$321,818

TOWN OF BROOKLINE

Request for Reserve Fund Transfer

To the Board of Selectmen:

Date: 03/06/2014

It is hereby requested that you approve and transmit to the Advisory Committee the following Reserve Fund Transfer:

Department Veterans' Services Total Transfer Requested \$ 30,000.00

Org # 54305430 Object # 557010 AMOUNT \$ 30,000.00

Org # _____ Object # _____ AMOUNT \$ _____

Org # _____ Object # _____ AMOUNT \$ _____


Org # _____ Object # _____ AMOUNT \$ _____

Org # _____ Object # _____ AMOUNT \$ _____

Description (or attach memorandum): Request for veteran's emergency assistance

has increased, leaving the Department of Veteran's Services with a shortfall.

The request will also cover the costs of the 2014 Memorial Day
Parade/Ceremony.


Department Head

Approved:

Board of Selectmen

BROOKLINE ADVISORY COMMITTEE

Subcommittee on Planning and Regulation

Report on FY2015 Planning Department Budget

The Planning and Regulation Subcommittee held a public hearing on the FY2015 Department of Planning and Community Development budget on Thursday, February 20, at 7:00 p.m. in Brookline Town Hall Room 103. In attendance were the members of the subcommittee: Sean Lynn-Jones (chair), Lee Selwyn, and Angela Hyatt. Also present were Deputy Town Administrator Sean Cronin, Planning Director Alison Steinfeld, Building Commissioner Daniel Bennett, Regina Frawley (TMM-P16), and Patricia Connors (TMM-P?).

Proposed FY2015 Budget (See pp. IV-35–IV-40 of the *FY-2015 Financial Plan*)

The recommended FY2015 Planning and Community Development budget reflects an increase of \$87,760, which is a 13.2% increase from the budgeted FY2014 level. The summary breakdown is as follows:

	<u>Actual FY13</u>	<u>Budget FY14</u>	<u>Request FY15</u>	<u>Change FY15 vs. FY14</u>	
Personnel	\$ 578,012	\$ 633,463	\$ 720,303	+\$ 86,840	+13.7%
Services	\$ 23,830	\$ 16,025	\$ 16,945	+\$ 920	+5.7%
Supplies	\$ 7,704	\$ 9,212	\$ 9,212	\$ 0	0.0%
Other	\$ 3,455	\$ 4,550	\$ 4,550	+\$ 0	0.0%
Capital	\$ 7,597	\$ 3,200	\$ 3,200	0	0.0%
TOTAL	\$ 620,598	\$ 666,450	\$ 754,210	+\$ 87,760	+13.2%
BENEFITS			\$ 509,583		
REVENUE	\$ 23,855	\$ 6,000	\$ 7,000	+\$ 1,000	+16.67%

The increase in personnel costs is primarily due to the transfer of staff support for the Zoning Board of Appeals from the Town Clerk's office to the Department of Planning and Community Development. Personnel costs are also affected by a reduction in Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) funding and a reorganization of the housing and CDBG-funded staff. See below for discussion of these changes.

Steps increase the budget by \$5,004 compared to FY2014. Longevity pay adds \$1,720.

The \$920 increase in services is for subscriptions.

The Planning and Community Development Department supports four program areas:

Planning and Administration
Preservation
Housing
Economic Development

Discussion

Staff Support for the Zoning Board of Appeals

The proposed budget includes \$45,951 for a new position of zoning administrative assistant. This position would support the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA). Support for the ZBA previously has been provided by the Town Clerk's office. Planning Director Alison Steinfeld and Building Commissioner Daniel Bennett both argued that transferring support to the Planning Department made sense. The subcommittee was concerned that the Planning Department would be providing staff support to the Planning Board and the ZBA, which could be problematic, given that the Planning Board makes recommendations to the ZBA. Alison Steinfeld assured the subcommittee that the Planning Board and ZBA staff would remain separate. The subcommittee was advised that the transfer of ZBA support from the Town Clerk's office to the Planning Department is reflected in a commensurate reduction in the Town Clerk's staffing and budget for FY2015.

The Town Administrator's Budget Message (p. I-7) offers three justifications for the transfer of ZBA support from the Town Clerk's Office to the Planning Department. First, the Hancock Village 40B proposal makes it necessary to consolidate the zoning approval process in one department. Second, state law and Brookline zoning are complicated. Consolidating the zoning approval process in the Planning Department will reduce the risk that a mistake could lead to an automatic approval of an application. Third, creating this position will reduce the number of staff at the ZBA's meeting and thereby reduce overtime costs.

The idea of transferring support for the ZBA from the Town Clerk's office to the Planning Department is not new. It was recommended in the 2012 Collins Center report on the organization of the Planning Department. It also was discussed when the Town created the (now-defunct) position of zoning administrator several years ago. The person hired for that position, which was in the Planning Department, became the Building Commissioner and the position was subsequently eliminated. The proposed zoning administrative assistant would not perform the same function as the former zoning administrator.

The zoning administrative assistant's duties will include:

- Scheduling the Planning Board and ZBA
- Posting notices of meetings
- Taking and posting minutes
- Assisting the Chief Inspector with drafting ZBA decisions
- Following legal deadlines, such as the 100 days to decide on a request for a variance, to ensure that the Town does not miss such deadlines and thereby make a "constructive grant" of an application that otherwise would have been denied

The Town Clerk's office will still receive applications, as required under Chapter 40A, and will work with the Chief Inspector in the Building Department and with the Planning Department.

Housing Staff and CDBG Funding

Housing Development Manager Fran Price has retired and that CDBG-funded position has been eliminated, because (a) there are no current housing development projects, and (b) new federal regulations require that funds from the Department of Housing and Urban Development must be spent in the year in which they are received.

Planning Director Steinfeld noted that the department will still have two housing planners on staff. They can handle existing housing programs. One of those positions will be increased from 0.8 FTE to 1.0 FTE. The employee requested this increase and there is a need for the additional time.

A new CD-funded part-time (18.5 hours) CD fiscal assistant will be added at cost of \$25,436. The department had been using an outside consultant for these responsibilities.

The CD secretary position has been reclassified from C-4 to C-5 (an increase of \$1,447) because the position requires additional skills and training to use the required software.

The CDBG charge-off for the Senior Planner, Planner, and Part-Time Preservation Planner (a total of \$40,804) has been eliminated.

CDBG funding is partly based on the age of a community's housing stock. Thus Brookline continues to receive funds, even though it is a relatively affluent community. It is becoming harder to find low-income areas within Brookline in which CDBG funds can be spent.

Preservation

As more Local Historic Districts (LHDs) have been created in recent years, there has been some concern that the department's current preservation staff may not be able to handle the increased workload. The budget request for FY2015 does not include additional funding for the preservation staff. FTEs for preservation remain at 1.8. Prior to FY2013, preservation FTEs were at 1.59. The increase was recommended by the Advisory Committee after the Planning and Regulation Subcommittee initially voted to recommend 2.0 FTEs, but the 0.8 FTE staff member declined to accept the increase in her work schedule above that level. The subcommittee held further discussions of this topic when it considered the FY2014 budget.

The Preservation Commission has not asked for additional staff for FY2015. Alison Steinfeld reported that the Commission is comfortable with the current staff levels. She believes that the current staff will be able to perform any additional work necessitated by the establishment of one or more new Neighborhood Conservation Districts (NCDs). At some point, more staff may be required to handle the work associated with additional NCDs or LHDs.

Because specialized skills are required, other Planning and Community Development staff members cannot easily assist the preservation staff. In other areas, such as economic development and regulatory planning, staff members are able to "swing" from one area to another. Interns, however, are able to assist with some of the work related to preservation, including filing.

The subcommittee did not consider a motion to amend the Planning and Community Development budget to increase FTEs devoted to preservation.

Recommendation

By a vote of 3–0, the Planning and Regulation Subcommittee recommends a FY2015 appropriation of \$754,210 for Planning and Community Development.

Brookline Town Clerk's Office FY15 Operating Budget

The Administration and Finance Subcommittee of the Brookline Advisory Committee held a public hearing to consider the Brookline Town Clerk's Office FY15 operating budget on March 10, 2014 at 6:00 p.m. in room 111 of the Brookline Town Hall. In attendance were Harry Bohrs, Clifford Brown, Bernard Green, John Dogget and Town Clerk Patrick Ward.

Financial Plan

The Town Clerk's Office operating budget details appear on II-14 and IV-29 in the Financial Plan.

The Office

The Town Clerk is a three-year-term elected position. The Town Clerk oversees an office involved in activities that breakdown into the following subprograms:

Public Records - Duties include the keeping of the Town Seal and all official records of the Town; maintaining all rules, regulations, and by-laws governing the Town's various boards, departments, commissions, and committees; certifying Town Meeting actions and official documents; performing oaths of office; recording all births, deaths, and marriages and issuing certified copies of same; issuing licenses, permits, certificates, and renewals.

Elections - The Town Clerk is the mandated authority for conducting federal, state, and local elections. The Town Clerk serves as the custodian of the voting machines and is responsible for the supervision and instruction of over 200 election workers in the use of those machines and in laws pertinent to their duties. The Town Clerk is required to provide certified election results to the Office of the Secretary of State, the Bureau of Accounts, and numerous other governing bodies and agencies.

Voter Registration - The Town Clerk serves as an ex-officio member of the Board of Registrars of Voters. Duties include registering all eligible residents of the Town as voters, producing a street list of the residents of the Town, and certifying signatures of registered voters of the Town on nomination papers of candidates for federal, state, and local office, as well as referendum and initiative petition

The office is currently staffed with 6 permanent FTE's including the Town Clerk, Asst. Town Clerk, Adm. Asst., Prin. Clerk, Sr. Clerk Typist, and Sr. Clerk Typist (assigned to work with the ZBA).

FY15 Budget

The *revised* proposed budget increases by 15%. This is driven largely by personnel expenses (\$104.4K) for Election Works to serve three upcoming elections. And, costs associated with steps and longevity.

The originally proposed budget contemplated reducing the FTE's from 6.0 to 5.0 by eliminating the Sr. Clerk Typist position associated with the ZBA and placing a new position within Planning in order to better facilitate coordination between the ZBA, Planning and Building.

However, there are certain statutory obligations on the part of the Town Clerk and the Town Clerk's office that require some of these ZBA related duties to emanate from the Town Clerk. Therefore, there is a revised budget proposal that maintains a 0.5 FTE position within the Clerk's office (5.5 FTE total) and reallocates certain stipends to ZBA Board members. The net change to the Town Clerk's office is \$13,025, increasing the originally proposed amount from \$614,607 to **\$627,632**.

Attached is a memorandum from the Town Administrator outlining the budget change and how it also affects other lines in the budget (Planning, Building, IOD Medical).

Recommendation

The A&F Subcommittee recommends favorable action in the amount of \$627,632 (revised amount) for the FY15 Town Clerk's Office operating budget.



**OFFICE OF THE TOWN ADMINISTRATOR
MEMORANDUM**

TO: Board of Selectmen
Harry Bohrs, Chair, Advisory Committee

FROM: Mel Kleckner, Town Administrator

SUBJECT: Modification of FY 2015 Budget Recommendations

DATE: March 10, 2014

This memorandum addresses a modification in my recommendation for the FY 2015 Town Clerk's Budget. As you may recall, I had proposed reductions in this budget based upon the decision to transfer administrative responsibilities for the Zoning Board of Appeals (ZBA) from the Town Clerk's office to the Planning Department (see explanation on page I-7 of the Financial Plan). While I remain committed to the transfer of these duties to the Planning Department, certain information has come to my attention that has caused me to reconsider the extent of reductions in the Town Clerk's budget.

It is noted that the transfer of ZBA responsibilities cannot obviate some statutory requirements of a Town Clerk's office under Massachusetts General Laws Chapter 40A (the Zoning Act). In addition, it has been suggested that the Town Clerk's ZBA stipend may have been the result of some compromise over salary and classification issues raised several years ago. As a result, I have decided to restore one-half of a clerical position back to the Department and to restore the ZBA stipend pending further review and consideration. In addition, this budget issue has raised other questions about the location of certain budget accounts. Specifically, stipends for ZBA members reside in the Town Clerk's office, as does the stipend for the Board of Examiners. I propose that these accounts, consisting of \$11,100 in ZBA stipends and \$300 in Board of Examiners stipends, be transferred to the Planning Department and the Building Department budgets respectively.

Finally, I wish to address the matter of how the reduction in staffing in the Town Clerk's office will be implemented. It is not my intent to have an existing employee of the Town laid-off as a result of this budget decision. Recognizing the need to follow collective bargaining requirements for a reduction in force, I am committed to work with the Union to ensure that the incumbent employee will be placed in another suitable Town position.

Please find below a table documenting the proposed changes in the Town Clerk's FY 2015 Budget. In order to cover its impact, I propose a reduction in the amount of \$24,425 in the Public Safety Medical Disability account. Thank you for your consideration.

cc: Members of the Advisory Committee Subcommittee on A&F
 Pat Ward, Town Clerk
 Alison Steinfeld, Director of Planning and Community Development
 Dan Bennett, Building Commissioner

TABLE OF PROPOSED BUDGET CHANGES

	FY15 Original	FY15 Amended	Change	Note
Town Clerk				
510101 Permanent Full Time Salaries	324,608	347,033	22,425	.5 FTE restored
510102 Permanent Part Time Salaries	15,900	4,500	(11,400)	ZBA, Board of Examiners member stipends
514501 Town Clerk ZBA (Stipend)	0	2,000	2,000	ZBA staff stipend
Planning				
510102 Permanent Part Time Salaries	55,368	66,468	11,100	ZBA member stipends
Building				
510102 Permanent Part Time Salaries	16,180	16,480	300	Board of Examiners member stipends
TOTAL DEPARTMENTAL CHANGES	412,056	436,481	24,425	
Public Safety IOD Medical Expenses	325,000	300,575	(24,425)	
	GRAND TOTAL	0		

Brookline Advisory Committee Capital Subcommittee
Building Department Budget Review: FY15 At Budget Pages II-15; IV-54

The Capital Subcommittee held a public hearing at 6 p.m. on March 4, 2014 in Town Hall room 408. Attendees included: Capital Subcommittee members Carla Benka, Pam Lodish, Fred Levitan, and Amy Hummel; Deputy Town Administrator, Sean Cronin; Charlie Simmons and Dan Bennett from the Building Department; Peter Rowe from the School Department; as well as Fred Lebow, and Town Meeting Members Clint Richmond and Harry Friedman.

The proposed budget for FY15 is **\$7,024,204**, which is a **-0.8% (\$56,572) decrease** over FY14.

While there is an increase of \$115,587 in personnel (5.6%), the overall **decrease** in the budget is the anticipated **result of the addition of two Senior Maintenance Craftsmen** for HVAC maintenance. The additional FTEs will cost the Town \$108,709 plus benefits or a total of \$145,000 including benefits; however, there is an estimated 80,000 to 83,000 in savings a year to the town none-the-less. The remaining difference in the personnel increases is the result of Steps (\$4, 581) and Longevity (\$2,100)

Per the Town Administrator's budget message on page I-8, the Town was spending \$228,000 for HVAC maintenance; that amount, minus the new cost for these two positions justifies bringing these contracted services back in-house. The committee did question the numbers in the budget, since the budget summary on II-15 indicates a savings of only \$97,189 for both Town and Schools Building Repair and Maintenance, not 228,000; however, additional savings for repair work of \$82,331 which is not reflected in the II-15 summary accounts for the difference .

The budget also reflects a **decrease in Utilities (\$70,761)** (2.6%) thanks to the lower contract for Natural Gas (\$72,770), and a reduction in Water and Sewer allowances (\$14,932) which the town is increasingly better at projecting, offset by an **increase in Electricity (\$16,089) and Gasoline (\$852)**.

There are **Capital decreases of \$6,500 (10.3%)** as well as **funds for two vehicle replacements (a van and a car), a small trailer, a personnel lift, and 18 computer leases**. There was some discussion at the meeting regarding the energy efficiency of vehicles slated for purchase; it was noted that new purchases meet the Town's Green Energy policy; however, at present the possibility of purchasing hybrids remains an expensive and less likely alternative than a purchase of other energy efficient vehicles.

FY15 Objectives

Some of the FY15 objectives touched upon in the discussion included:

- **Continued plans to upgrade energy management systems** using CIP fund and Green Community monies; and
- **Continued energy efficiency improvements** in all Town and School Buildings using grant, rebate monies and/or CIP funds.
- **Continued work with the School Department** and designer to determine an acceptable scope of work for Old Lincoln School renovations, as well as work related to several other School space needs projects. (Currently there are no plans to either add modular or a stick built addition to Lawrence for the coming school year.)
- **Expanding public building security** and keycard systems; notably the addition of still more recording cameras at some school entrances; these cameras are limited to outside entrance areas only.

FY13 Accomplishments

Some of the FY13 accomplishments include:

- **Installing five high-efficiency condensing boilers**, two of which were paid for by Green Communities funds, as well as \$20,000 rebates from the gas company.
- **Making a wide variety of changes/improvements to schools and other town facilities**, the details of which are noted in the budget book. Noteworthy per discussions last year, structural repairs on **Devotion House** to improve the stability of the building (the joists holding the building were 2x3s), are complete. The department will continue to monitor the structure once demolition and construction at Devotion School begin.
- Completed the long-anticipated work on the **Pierce School Auditorium**. To that end, there are monies left over from that project in the CIP, which the department anticipates using for lighting and to help create a more efficient cafeteria layout.

Updates

RFP for the **Larz Anderson Auto Museum** remains unsigned, and are Tenants at Will, though they are up to date on their agreed on payments to the town for current and past use. The Building Department has done roof repair, life safety systems and plumbing on site, as the Town is no longer relying on the Auto Museum to manage that type maintenance on the structure.

27 Ackers Avenue was up for lease last year; the same tenant entered into a new agreement with Town; the lease began May 1, 2013 and will end April 30, 2016, though there is an option to renew for 3 years. The rental fee is \$1500 per year w/ 3% annual increase.

The Capital Subcommittee recommends approval on the request of **\$7,024,204** for the FY15 Building Department operating budget.